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Media Release

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Biden Alerts Schools to Bullying Presentation Scams *Schools in Maryland and Pennsylvania have been targeted*

Wilmington – Attorney General Beau Biden warned school officials to be on the lookout for scam artists who fraudulently promise to facilitate a visit by a professional athlete or other celebrity to their school to speak as part of an anti-bullying program.

“Scammers will do almost anything to make a quick buck, sadly even stealing from our kids.” Attorney General Biden stated. “Fortunately, there are a few simple steps you can take to help ensure you don’t fall victim to this scam, including checking references of previous customers and not paying for a service until it has been provided.”

Last month a Maryland man was arrested on theft charges after promising schools in at least five Maryland counties that a member of the Baltimore Ravens would speak at assemblies. Shortly before the scheduled appearances the man called the schools to cancel the visit, but kept money that had already been paid. Nearly 20 schools are reported to have fallen victim to this scam, at a cost of more than \$14,000, according to the *Annapolis Capital* newspaper.

Several Pennsylvania schools have reported to the state’s Attorney General’s Office that they have received calls asking if they would like a celebrity or athlete to appear at an assembly to deliver an anti-bullying message, pose for pictures and sign autographs for students.

Attorney General Biden’s office has conducted free presentations on the dangers of bullying and how to stay safe online to approximately 30,000 students in Delaware schools and to many community forums across the state. If your school or organization would like the Attorney General to speak at an anti-bullying event or schedule a presentation on bullying and online safety e-mail DOJ_Ambassador@state.de.us or call 302-577-8288.

If your school or organization has received a call that may be part of an anti-bullying scam or any other suspected fraud, contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Unit at consumer.protection@state.de.us or 1-800-220-5454.

To report cases of bullying, you can call the Attorney General’s School Crimes and Bullying Hotline at 1-800-220-5414.

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